

2-1960

TOWER  
FEBRUARY 1960





# FOR OBSCURE REASONS

For obscure reasons the preachments of a young man named Valentine to his fellows regarding the necessity to remain constant and honorable in marriage so infuriated the Roman authorities that on the afternoon of February 14, 270, the Emperor Claudius II chopped off his head. It is unclear just how Valentine's martyrdom led to the later custom of sending bad poetry through the mail, and one theory holds that Valentine is a fictitious character and his Day a watered down version of the springtime Roman feast of Lupercalia. This festivity contained considerable fooling around among the youths and maidens of Rome, and a few hours on the Eve of the Fourteenth when they visited the temple of Pan and Juno and there put their names into separate pots - the boys then drew the girls' names and vice versa, and everyone was provided a playmate for the coming dances and other pubescent amusements. Whatever the case, nothing more is heard of Valentine's Day until Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules*, and then only "for this was on seynt Valentine's Day, when every foul cometh ther to chese his make," which had to do with the medieval French and English notion that February 14, the start of the second fortnight of the second month, was the mating day of the birds. In the sixteenth century verse Valentines appeared, and this style went on largely unchanged until the nineteenth, when the illustrated mechanical Valentine became popular - pull a string and the lady plays a harp or the little boy rides his little hobby horse, and quite often the little boy rides his little hobby horse above a verse dealing with fawns or nightingales or "see Daddy come home from the far away hill, the candle's alight on the window sill." After such triumphs the nasty Valentine of the 1890's seems a logical defensive manuever; one might read, "Look little maiden and see, open this door for me," and the card was opened and a small mirror on the back sat above a heavy line asking, "How ugly can you be?" In 1919 the "To My Sweetheart" and "Be My Valentine" motif was introduced, and the art of the Valentine reached zenith. Today it is still "Be My Valentine", but whatever the concomitant artistic decrepitude, Valentine's Day remains a fresh and childlike occasion, and in this age when the most hallowed of our traditions are thrown on the block of commercialism, it is heartwarming to know that the girl to whom you shyly sent a piglet Valentine long ago in the third grade will still be pleased and touched by an equally simple reminder of your enduring affection - a tiny emerald perhaps, or a funny old Rolls. And there is always the chance someone will observe Valentine's Day with you in the manner mentioned by Ophelia:

Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day  
 All in the morning betime,  
 And I a maid at your window,  
 To be your Valentine.

Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,  
 And dupp'd the chamber door;  
 Let in the maid, that out a maid  
 Never departed more.

This is certainly in the tradition of martyrdom, and by all the Saints, it would be a dandy Valentine.

RHS



## FRAGMENT #1

SWAN  
 SWAN INTO SWAN  
 I HAVE GONE ON  
 SPAWNING THE SWANBUD  
 I SEE GHOSTS AT NIGHT SING  
 CERTAIN SONGS OF DEATH TO YOU  
 SIGH IN YOUR HIPS, RESTLESS  
 WHERE MY LIPS FLY.

I HEAR WHISPERS FROM OLD SHOES  
 I HAVE KILLED THE ROSE  
 FLOWER LEAF  
 STEM  
 ROOTS EARTH.  
 WOMAN.

THOMAS Houser

## UNTITLED

Brown, shrunken, wrinkled  
 limbs,  
 Blown  
 in the breeze of progress.  
 Skeletal, emaciated trunks  
 with rings countable  
 Protruding through parched encasement.  
 Fall comes -- Spring and Summer -- long gone.  
 then Winter  
 End  
 then...  
 leaves of humanity scatter,  
 decay,  
 and in time, by-passed -- by rejuvenation.  
 Youth!  
 not age revered.

Sheila Angelo

Cover this sheet too with agonized re-appraisals? Why re-appraise so quiet, easy, and peaceful a decline as this? In the midst of the world (call it world) is there any longer a need for agony?

Agony! The awareness of the possibility of difference, that the situation could be other than it is: creating the impossible ideal surrounded by a halo of anguish.

F.M.

THIS  
 SPRING  
 CSFA  
 IS  
 PRODUC-  
 ING A  
 NEW  
 LITER-  
 ARY  
 MAGAZINE  
 BUT WE  
 NEED HELP  
 WITH  
 GRAPHICS  
 TYPING  
 PHOTO  
 WORK  
 CONTACT  
 LASH  
 OR  
 O'SHAU-  
 GHNESSY



## LANDSCAPES #1

Leon H. Sarsozo

beyond the blanketing gaze  
rains are draining the weight  
leaving gray smoky clouds  
swimming under the bluishness  
  
at some point beyond the haze  
the light hides among vague colors  
whining with a windless silence  
  
slowly the blue moves  
giving a new field for the wind  
without the slightest desire  
space waits for a movement of life

a sudden piercing sound  
cuts through the jugged silence  
as thoughts blend with the fluttering leaves  
flashing wide into a shower of colors

## LANDSCAPES #2

at scattered points  
the blurry treetops curl in a lazy dance  
waiting in the shade  
for a passing whirlpool of light

the whole landscape waits swaying  
while the leaves whistle  
with a soothing rhyme  
sprinkling the first drops of rain  
the showering spring

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C.S.P.A.

"OF COURSE, FORCE WILL WREST ANYTHING FROM CHINA:  
BUT WHEREVER THERE IS ACTION THERE IS REACTION;  
AND AS SURE AS NATURAL LAW CONTINUES TO  
ACT, SO SURE IT IS THAT APPEALS TO FORCE  
IN ONE AGE WILL GIVE TO THE MEN  
OF A LATER DAY A HERITAGE OF  
VENGEANCE --- THE EUROPEANS OF  
SOME FUTURE DAY MAY WISH THAT THEIR  
FOREFATHERS HAD NOT SOWN THE SEEDS  
OF HATRED IN THE BAYONET-PLoughed  
SOIL OF CATHAY."

— Com. 250 BC

Early next year, Chinese  
have the A-bomb

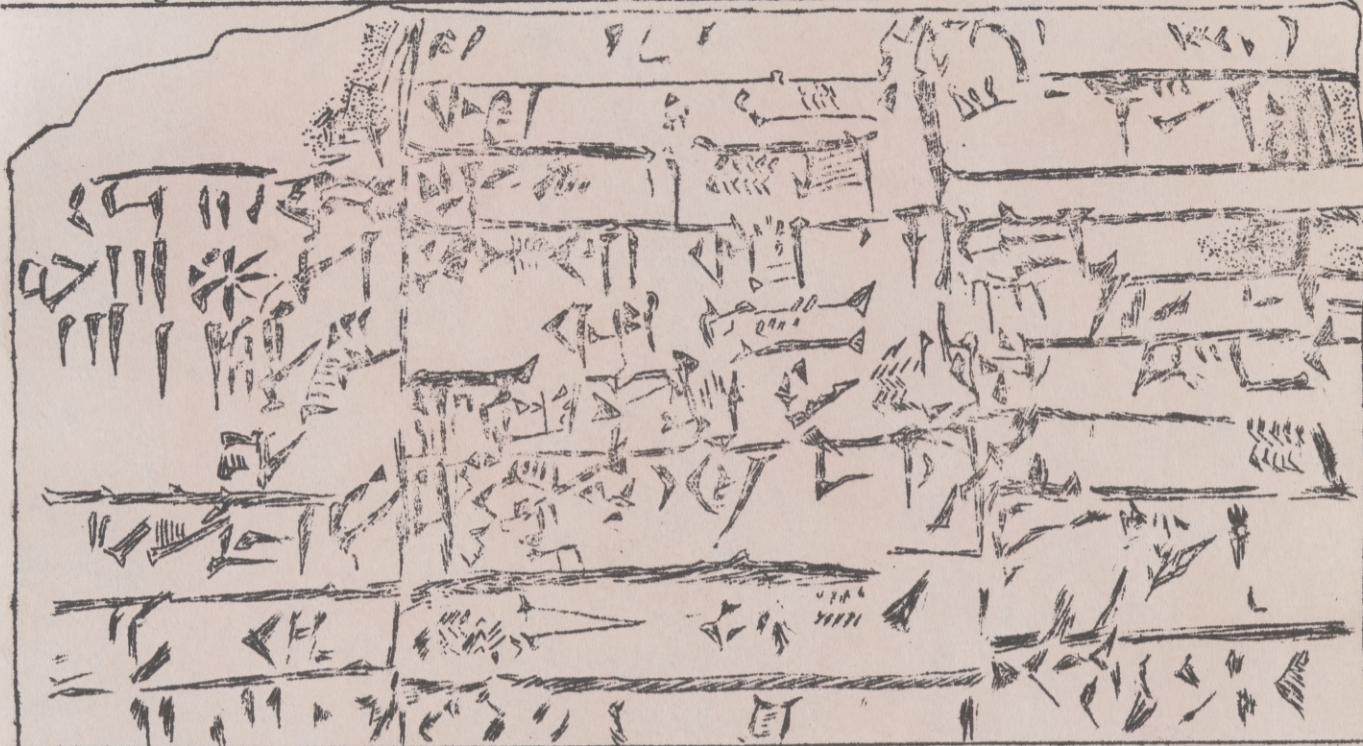
- Han period costume
- 16th Demon. Very powerful. Jo Tison, guardian of  
God of War. Real bandit Chief of 3rd Century,  
Kwang Hsi province. Snatched from a temple in 149.
- Mirrors added in 10th C
- Burn incense. Pray for success in war,  
Gifts of food + weapons.

WRITTEN BY AN ENGLISHMAN IN 1868

(Missionary William Morrison?)

"OF COURSE, FORCE WILL WREST ANYTHING FROM CHINA: BUT WHEREVER THERE IS ACTION THERE IS REACTION; AND AS SURE AS NATURAL LAW CONTINUES TO ACT, SO SURE IT IS THAT APPEALS TO FORCE IN ONE AGE WILL GIVE TO THE MEN OF A LATER DAY A HERITAGE OF VENGEANCE --- THE EUROPEANS OF SOME FUTURE DAY MAY WISH THAT THEIR FOREFATHERS HAD NOT SOWN THE SEEDS OF HATRED IN THE BAYONET-PLoughed SOIL OF CATHAY."





TWO PRESCRIPTIONS (SUMERIAN) - REVERSE OF THE "MEDICAL" TABLET FROM NIPPUR

gish-hashhur-babbar (white pear(?)  
e-ri-nau-gish-nanna (moon plant)  
u-gaz (pulverize)  
kash-e u-tu (dissolve in beer)  
lu al-nag-nag (let the man drink)

NUMUN-NIG-NABAR-SAR ("CARPENTER" PLANT SEED)  
SHIM-MAR-KA-ZI (GUM RESIN OF MARKAZI)  
U-HA-SHU-AN-UM (THYME)  
U-GAZ (PULVERIZE)  
KASH-E U-TU (LET THE MAN DRINK).



Sumerians began writing on clay about five thousand years ago. The city of Nippur, about one hundred miles south of Baghdad in Iraq, was the spiritual and cultural center of ancient Sumer. A poem from Nippur begins with what may be a description of the difficulties of the gods in procuring their bread, especially after female deities had come into being... "O my son, fashion servants of the gods, may they produce their doubles..."

Jill Strohn

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SALLY,  
where  
are  
you?

